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ABSTRACT

Four brief reports of the 1968 Educational Commission are presented: an account of drop-outs at universities and colleges; an investigation of trend in social distribution of students at universities and colleges during expansion of education in postwar period; illustrations of mobility and interchangeability on labor market of persons with higher education; investigations of changes in recruitment areas of universities and colleges, and effect of education on economic growth. (NF)

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SWEDISH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

1968 Educational Commission (U 68)

University Studies without a Degree. Report to the 1968 Educational Commission. Summary and comments.
(Government Official Reports
SOU 1971:60)

The first report of the 1968 Educational Commission presents a brief account of an investigation of "interruption of studies" (drop-outs) at universities and colleges. Some associated questions of educational policy are also considered. The investigation was carried out by the Forecasting Institute of the Central Bureau of Statistics at the request of U 68. The complete report will be published later together with reports on other investigations being made by the Commission.

The investigation has provided wider information on several of the problems to be considered by U 68. It provides a valuable basis, for example, for assessing the future capacity of higher educational establishments. It also shows that many students even today have tried a form of recurrent education, i.e. alternation between education and a job. It points to the importance of giving to upper secondary education a form which prepares students both for continued studies and for a vocation. Education without a formal degree often proves to be a step in a specific combination of subjects at different faculties or schools. The investigation thereby illustrates the function and defects of degrees in providing information on the educational system to both students and employers.

The investigation relates to "interruption of studies" at faculties of arts and sciences, law, technology and economics for students admitted in 1956/57 and those who interrupted their studies between 1966 and 1967.

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The group of students who break off their studies definitively or for a fairly lengthy period is multifaceted.

Many had not at all planned to take a degree. Their primary object had been, for example, to supplement earlier education, prepare for later education, or an interest in a particular subject. These students often have had some form of vocational education or employment at the time of admission.

But among those who break off their studies there is also a large group of students who for various reasons have had extremely long periods of study or have "failed". Among the chief reasons are financial problems, a job besides the studies, and family conditions.

Many of those who break off their university studies change to another postsecondary or secondary education, return to an earlier job or take a new job.

Among the younger without vocational education who break off their studies (of whom a large number are women) there are many with low marks at upper secondary school. Many of them have started university studies in order to have time to consider their choice of later study and vocation. Among the latter, those who have changed to another educational programme or have had earlier experience of a job appear to have had the best prospects on the labour market.

The younger students who have interrupted their studies usually have a lower salary than those with a degree. For the older ones without a degree the situation is less clear. The latter have often had a job and, through their partial studies, would seem in many cases to have been able to get a job with a higher salary.

At the end of the report the authors bring up some associated questions of educational policy arising out of the investigation - expecially recurrent education, educational welfare problems and the sex distribution in the educational system.

SWEDISH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

1968 Educational Commission (U 68)

Choice of Education and Vocation
(Government Official Reports
SOU 1971: 61)

The second report of the 1968 Educational Commission contains an account of two investigations, one relating to pupils' choice at comprehensive school, continuation school and gymnasium, and the other to the choice at universities and colleges. The report shows the trend in the social distribution of students at universities and colleges during the rapid expansion of the educational system in the postwar period, and the factors underlying this trend.

In the investigation of pupils' choice of education at comprehensive school, continuation school and gymnasium a study is made of how different factors such as social group, sex, performance and interests affect their choice and their opinion on different vocational and educational questions, recurrent education, political interests. The investigation was carried out in March 1969 as a follow-up of earlier investigations of these pupil categories.

Pupils' choice of education at universities and colleges has been investigated with reference to their social origin, sex, and performance at the preceding educational level. The growth of higher education in Sweden since the thirties is analysed with special attention to the social composition of student groups. Pupils who entered the highest and next highest classes of lower secondary school in 1961 are followed, as well as their actual educational and vocational behaviour between 1961 and 1969. The investigation in this respect follows on the study "The way through the gymnasium" made for the Gymnasium Commission in the early sixties. Investigations are presented, finally, of the students at the Faculties of Arts and Sciences at Lund, 1960-68.

The Majority of pupils in the three forms of school investigated planned to continue their studies to a higher level. Their choice of education had been essentially decided before they reached the upper level of comprehensive school. Their marks at the intermediate level had been an important factor. The gymnasium was the form of upper secondary school which had far and away the greatest attraction, absorbing pupils especially from higher social groups (groups 1 and 2). The reasons for the choice of upper secondary school form may be said to be bound up with vocational prospects and marks attained. It is the vocational prospect that dominates the choice of gymnasium. The gymnasium was considered by large groups of pupils to be a necessary passport to an attractive vocation.

The social differences between the different forms of upper secondary school are striking. Whereas in social group 1 the gymnasium was chosen by 82 % and vocational school by 6 %, in social group 3 the corresponding figures were 25 % and 34 %. The elective group of subjects within the gymnasium was also affected by social factors. Pupils from social group 1 chose to a greater extent than other pupils a natural science line and to a lesser extent economics and technology. Thus, whereas the educational system is expanding and more and more pupils from lower social groups go on to higher studies, there is some social stratification within education. This is also illustrated by the choice of subject at universities and colleges.

Whereas social factors affected principally the choice of school form, the sex factor affected principally the choice of vocational orientation. Girls chose a social work line at continuation school and a humanities or social science line at gymnasium. They went in for nursing and teaching. The boys chose technical vocations.

In all forms of school the pupils say that what they want in their profession is that it gives a secure and stable future with little probability of need to change profession.

The investigation at universities and colleges shows that during a 30-year period the possibility of university and college studies has increased tenfold. The expansion has been greatest at the faculties of arts and sciences, especially social science. Since the fifties there has also been an increasing number of female students. During this period their number has increased more than that of men. Women are nevertheless still underrepresented at uni-

versities and colleges and constitute only a small proportion on the courses for lawyers, economists, theologians and natural scientists. It is also found that the proportion of women diminishes, the higher the education. In research training, for example, the proportion of women is less than at the basic college level.

In recent years the diiferences have diminished between young people from different social environments in respect of the numbers entering universities and colleges. At the same time there appears to be a residual or reinforced differentiation in respect of social groups at certain faculties and colleges, e.g. medicine, law, technology and economics.

Great differences between women and men appear at all educational levels in respect of vocational plans and employment after education, home situation, time spent on housework and care of children, income, and plans for further education.

In a special investigation of the faculties of arts and sciences at Lund it is seen how during the sixties they have changed in respect of the knowledge and proficiencies taught. At the beginning of the period they trained principally teachers. A large number of students also took supplementary courses for admission to a restricted-intake faculty or college. The present goals of students are increasingly technology and economics or administration. Nearly three-quarters of the students say that it would be regrettable if they had to change profession, but at the time of the investigation a majority were optimistic about their possibility of changing profession in view of the value of the education they received. The changes in political sympathy are finally illustrated. The result of a period at university tends to be that students from different social environments develop more similar views. At the same time, after four years of study, there is a clear relation between social origin of a student and that of his friends, which perhaps counteracts a change in the attitudes of students during their period of study.

SWEDISH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

1968 Educational Commission (U 68)

Higher Education and the Labour Market
(Government Official Reports SOU 1971:62)

The third report of the 1968 Educational Commission presents investigations which illustrate the mobility and interchangeability on the labour market of persons with higher education. An account is given also of the investigation of university studies without a degree, a summary of which was presented in Government Official Reports SOU 1971:60.

The mobility investigation was carried out by Per Sjöstrand with the assistance of Leif Grahm and Henrik Wingård of the Sociological Department of the university in Gothenburg. Data are presented from the end of the sixties which illustrate the attitude of people with higher education to mobility on the labour market, their actual mobility in the form of change, for example, of job/appointment, place of work and place of residence. The consequences of mobility for individual and society and for educational planning are also discussed.

The investigation shows that the highly valued factors are the possibility of self-development, of affecting one's own working situation and satisfying one's interests. Co-influence and friendly relations at work are other desires. Health service, care of the aged, child service, upper secondary school and facilities for sport and an open-air life should exist in the neighbourhood of one's work. Three-quarters of the persons interviewed placed a higher value on job/appointment than on geographical situation.

The tendency to mobility, as also the desires in respect of work, vary with sex, civil status, age, social orgin and ideological anchorage. Women wish in their work to have contact with and help other people, to be

able to combine work with children and family. Men place a higher value than women on a good salary and chances of promotion. The tendency to change work dimishes with rising age. The geographical mobility is greatest after leaving home but before setting up a home of one's own.

Most individuals go in for traditional professions and are tied to the place and region where they received their education.

The investigation shows great variations of mobility between different groups. The groups investigated have often had a positive attitude to mobility on the labour market. But many have no means for change of work in practice.

The interchangeability investigation was carried out by Olof Rydh and Gunnar Österberg. It is based chiefly on the Swedish Employers' Confederation's annual salary statistics for male employees of the following educational categories: graduate engineers, technical college engineers, technical institute engineers, bachelors of science in economics, and economists (gymnasial level). The material relates to the sexties. A study was also made of lawyers and social scientists for the last year of the period.

The manpower barometers, a measure of the supply of labour, showed in the early sixties a definite shortage of the categories investigated, whereas around 1965 the situation is denoted as more balanced. After a satisfactory supply during the intermediate years the situation at the end of the period is described as balanced.

The demand for a given educational category depends, among other things, on the supply of other categories which can partially perform the same types of work. Changes in the ratio of supply and demand for persons of a given education may lead to changes in employment conditions, e.g. salary and level of appointment, or to a redistribution of jobs between different educational categories.

The investigation shows that, despite a very considerable rise in the supply of an educational category, only insignificant changes of relative salary and other employment conditions have taken place. The labour markets studied are thus categorized by low price flexibility.

As a reduced demand for labour may be expected to affect chiefly the employment conditions for persons just entering on a career, the investigation was concentrated to this group.

Employment conditions have been studied in respect of average wage for new recruits, average appointment level for new recruits, and development of salary and appointment level in the years following recruitment.

Throughout it appears that the basic changes during the period investigated are smaller than the cyclical fluctuations. Some change in the average appointment level for new recruits has, however, taken place.

The average promotion for new recruits was relatively quickest for those recruited at a low level.

A shortage of an educational category may be expected to lead to the attempt to replace it by individuals from another category. If several categories can perform the same kind of work, they are interchangeable; and the better the possibilities of substitution, and the more they are used, the more probable it is that the market situation will be similar for those groups. A fairly considerable exchangeability appears to exist between different economist categories and between different engineer categories. The results show, too, that a cyclical recession appeared more quickly to affect persons with a shorter education. Those whith longer education had a greater possibility of choice between different appointments, and therefore a more secure position on the labour market.

SWEDISH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

1968 Educational Commission (U 68)

Higher Education - Regional Recruitment and Calculations Relating to the National Economy
(Government Official Reports SOU 1972:23)

The fourth report of the 1968 Educational Commission presents two investigations. One deals with the recruitment areas of universities and colleges, and the changes that are taking place, and different factors - such as the establishment of affiliated universities - which have affected students' choice of place of education during the sixties. The second deals with the question of the effect of education on economic growth.

The report on regional recruitment to universities and colleges during the sixties illustrates the students' choice of place of education, the incidence trend of students in different areas, the recruitment effect of the affiliated universities, and the inclination to study and the effect of distance on some student categories.

The investigation shows that to a large extent the students choose the nearest place of education. Thus recruitment areas are formed around universities, colleges and affiliated universities. The foundation of the University in Umeå and of the affiliated universities has reduced the average distance between students' homes and the educational centre and has altered the recruitment areas of the old universities. Thus the earlier strong influence of Uppsala and Stockholm in northern Sweden has been weakened.

The proportion of an age group who go on to universities and colleges doubled during the sixties. The student incidence in the old universities was high and increased greatly in the areas of Umeå and the affiliated universities. Several areas remote from an education centre still have a comparatively low incidence.

The advent of the affiliated universities is calculated to have brought an increase of about 15 % in the influx to higher studies in their neighbourhoods. A large number of the students from the neighbourhood started to study at the affiliated university, which thus relieved the load on the main universities. Others moved to a place where they could, for example, take a line not provided at the affiliated university, or simply to change environment. The affiliated universities do not seem to have changed the pattern of education within the student category which, even if there had been no affiliated university, would have taken a university education. The pattern for the new-recruited student groups, on the other hand, may have been affected.

The effect on recruitment of a new educational establishment has proved to differ for different student categories. Students with dispensation from the qualification rules and those who are 25 years of age or above, as also women, were most dependent on the existence of a nearby place of education in order to be able to study.

In the report "Calculations of the national economic factor in higher education" an investigation is made of the effect of different forms of education on the prospects for the individual to attain an increased production value in the form of goods and services. The intention is that, if such production effects are accessible to measurement, they could be weighted as one of several criteria in the planning of education.

Calculations are reported which are based on salary data and costs of education during the latter part of the sixties. The defects of the material and the limitations of the method used are discussed in the report. An important question, for example, is whether salaries can be used as measure of productivity.

The calculations relate both to the national economy and to individual economy. In the former case they are intended to illustrate the contribution of education to economic growth, in the latter to illustrate the problem of distribution. The results are difficult to interpret and provide no clearcut conclusions for educational planning. Among the lines of education which appear profitable both for the national economy and for the individual are business administration, engineering, law, medicine and dentistry. It is difficult, especially in view of the present rapid expansion of these lines of education, to judge whether they will retain their special position.

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